

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-01

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-04 OMB-01 AID-05 DRC-01 /063 W

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R 181110Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1205

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 7890

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PFOR, LA

SUBJ: MILITARY INCIDENTS IN LAOS

REF: A) STATE 228345

B) VIENTIANE 7805

C) VIENTIANE 7742

1. THE INCIDENTS ABOUT WHICH DEPARTMENT IS CONCERNED ARE TWO OF THE FIVE MOST NOTEWORTH THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE SINCE THE PGNU WAS FORMED IN APRIL. ALL OF THESE INCIDENTS, HOWEVER, WERE LOCALIZED, SHORT IN DURATION AND ENTAILED VERY FEW CASUALTIES ON EITHER SIDE. WE SEE NO EVIDENCE THAT THEY WERE PART OF A GENERAL PLAN; RATHER, IT APPEARS THAT AT HONGSA, PL TOOK ADVANTAGE OF A TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY AND THAT A RANDOM SIGHTING OF TROOPS IN TRANSIT MAY HAVE TOUCHED OFF BOUAM LONG INCIDENT. FAR REPORTING ON THE BOUAM LONG INCIDENT WAS PARTICULARLY SPOTTY AND VAGUE, AND WE BELIEVE GENERAL VANG PAO OVER-REACTED BY EMPLOYING T-28 STRIKES.

2. THERE IS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT SCATTERED ACTIONS OF THIS SORT WILL CONTINUE, ESPECIALLY IF THE FAR FAILS TO MAN ITS POSITIONS OR KEEPS THEM UNDER STRENGTH. THE TEMPTATION TO THE PL TO FILL THIS KIND OF VACUUM IS TOO HARD TO RESIST. HOWEVER, THIS TYPE OF INCIDENT HAS NOT

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AFFECTED AND SHOULD NOT AFFECT THE POLITICAL SITUATION.

THE VIENTIANE SIDE, SAVE FOR GENERAL VANG PAO WHO OFFICIALLY PROTESTED THE BOUAM LONG INCIDENT, IS NOT INCLINED TO MAKE MUCH ISSUE OF INFREQUENT AND UNCOORDINATED ATTACKS. IF THE INCIDENTS ARE RELATED TO PLACEMENT OF CEASEFIRE BOUNDARY STAKES, VIENTIANE SIDE MIGHT BRING UP INCIDENTS AT THE JOINT CENTRAL COMMISSION TO IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENT (JCCIA), AS IT DID IN THE CASE OF BAN POUNE (NEAR BAN HOUET SAI).

3. THIS IN TURN POSES AN INTERESTING PROBLEM, SINCE IT IS POSSIBLE THAT JCCIA INTEREST IN AN AREA MAY BE THE HONEY THAT ATTRACTS THE PL BEES. THE PL MAY DECIDE TO HEAT UP A SPECIFIC SITUATION BY PUTTING PRESSURE ON FAR WHEN IT APPEARS THAT THE JCCIA IS GOING TO DISCUSS CEASEFIRE MATTERS. AS FOR THE ICC, ITS TWO MEMBERS ARE NOW PLAYING LITTLE, IF ANY, ROLE IN LAOS. THEY OBSERVE SOME OF THE BOUNDARY MARKER ACTIVITIES, TRY TO BE FRIENDLY TO EVERYBODY, BUT READILY ADMIT THAT THEY ACCOMPLISH NOTHING.

4. WE CANNOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT IN THE FUTURE THE PL WILL EMPLOY ORCHESTRATED MILITARY PRESSURE OR THE THREAT OF MILITARY OPERATIONS TO GAIN THEIR POLITICAL GOALS. SO FAR, IN OUR JUDGEMENT, THEY HAVE NOT DONE SO.
WHITEHOUSE

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